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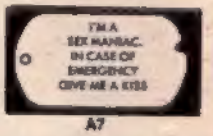

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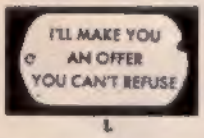

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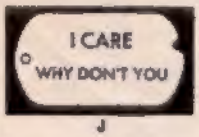

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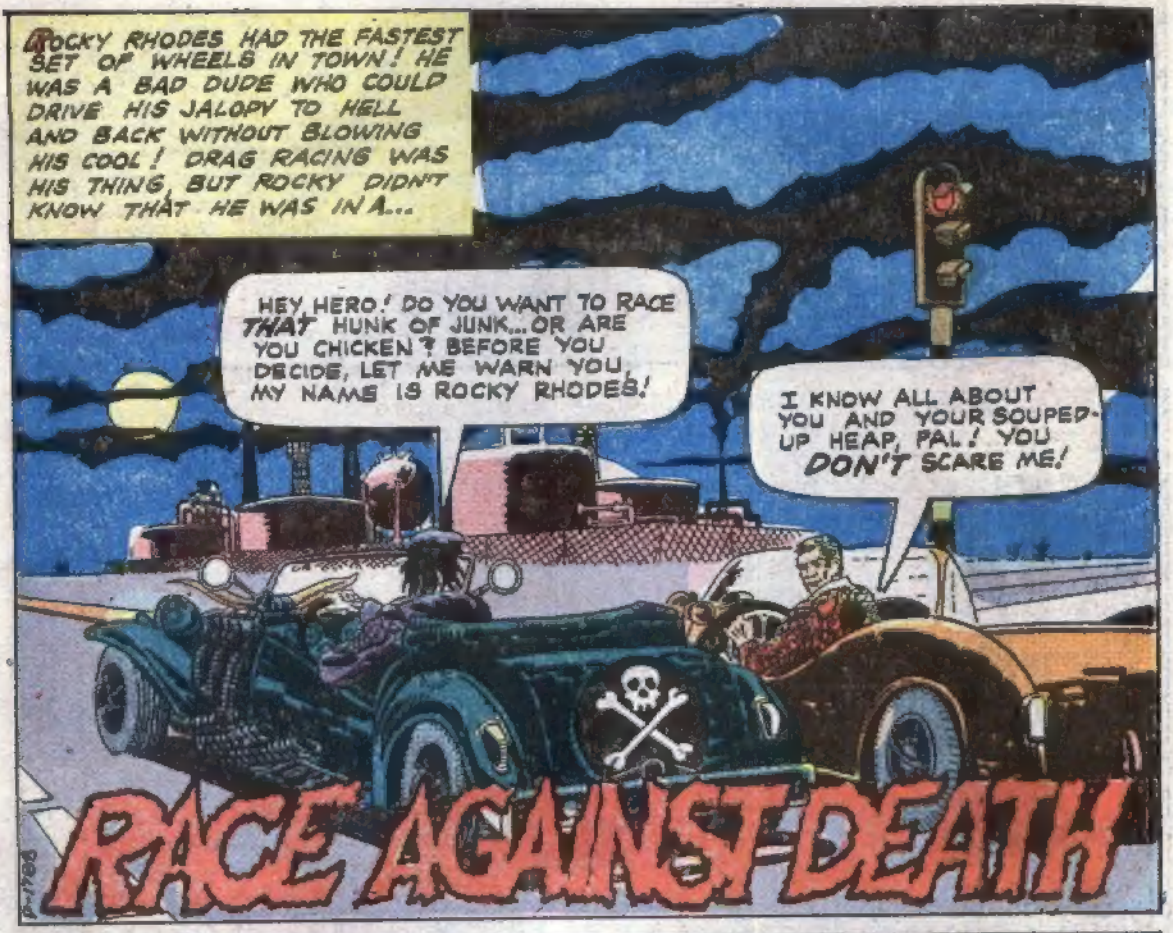
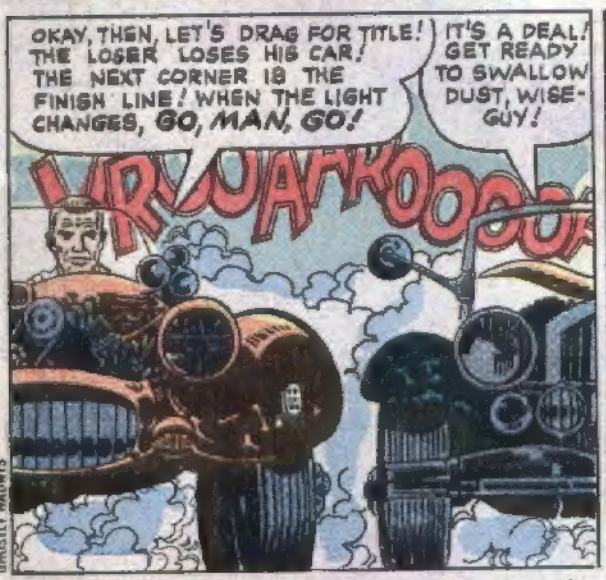
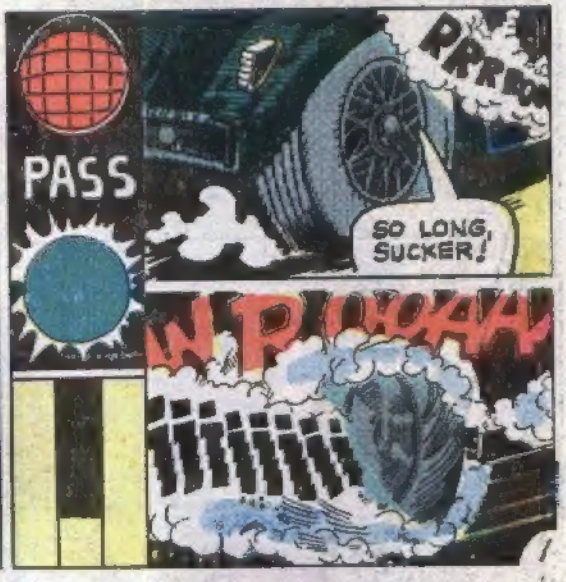

ROCKY RHODES HAD THE FASTEST SET OF WHEELS IN TOWN! HE WAS A BAD DUDE WHO COULD DRIVE HIS JALOPY TO HELL AND BACK WITHOUT BLOWING HIS COOL! DRAG RACING WAS HIS THING, BUT ROCKY DIDN'T KNOW THAT HE WAS IN A...
HEY HERO! DO YOU WANT TO RACE THAT HUNK OF JUNK...OR ARE YOU CHICKEN? BEFORE YOU DECIDE, LET ME WARN YOU, MY NAME IS ROCKY RHODES!
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR SOUPED-UP HEAP, PAL! YOU DON'T SCARE ME!
RACE AGAINST DEATH


OKAY, THEN, LET'S DRAG FOR TITLE! THE LOSER LOSES HIS CAR! THE NEXT CORNER IS THE FINISH LINE! WHEN THE LIGHT CHANGES, GO, MAN, GO!
IT'S A DEAL! GET READY TO SWALLOW DUST, WISE-GUY!
VRUUAAKOOOOOM



GHOSTLY HAUNTS

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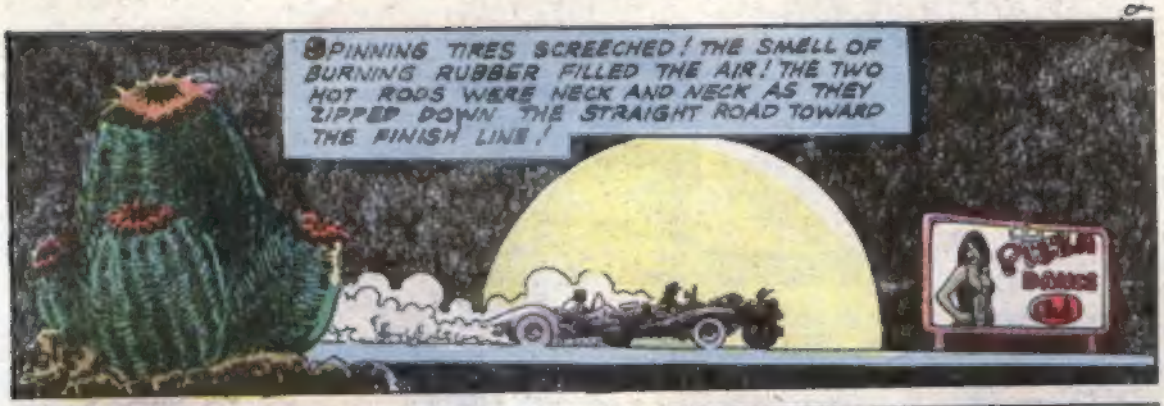
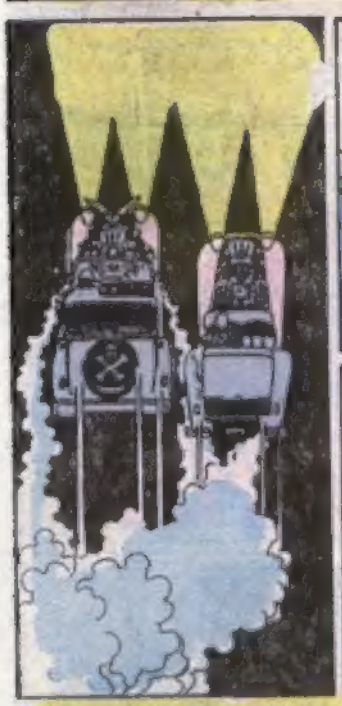
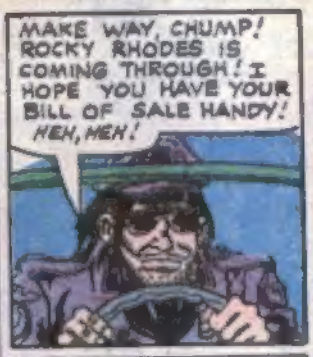
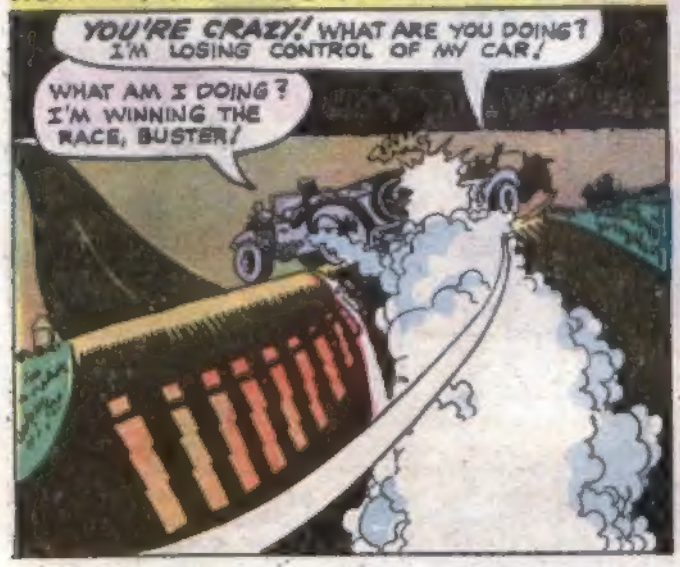
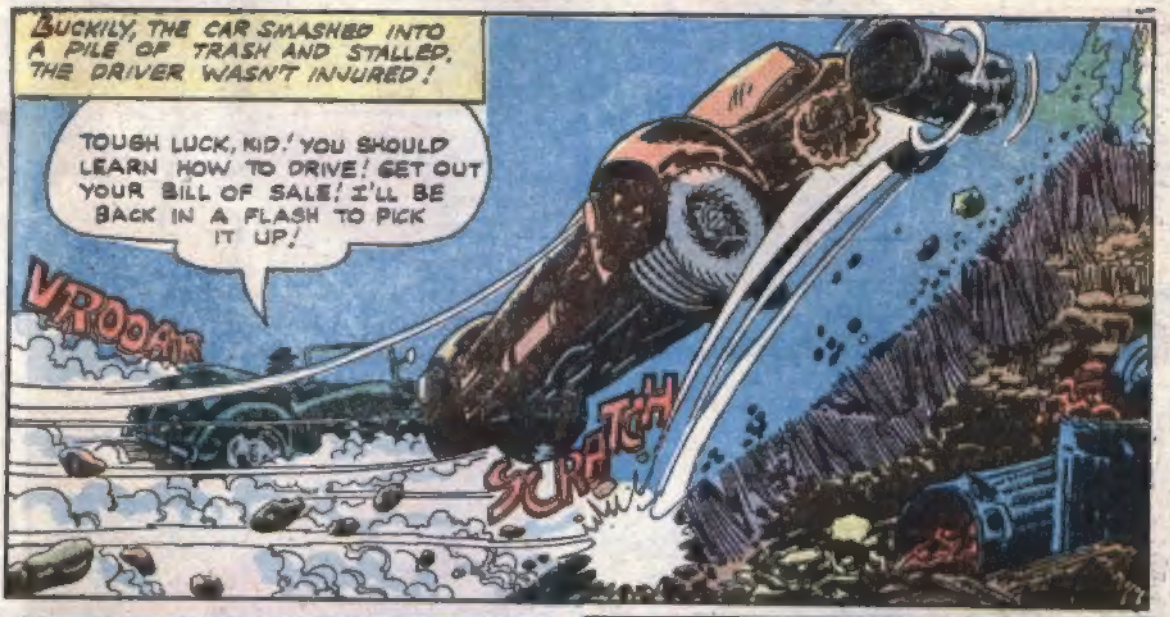

PINNING TIRES SCREECHED! THE SMELL OF BURNING RUBBER FILLED THE AIR! THE TWO HOT RODS WERE NECK AND NECK AS THEY ZIPPED DOWN THE STRAIGHT ROAD TOWARD THE FINISH LINE!

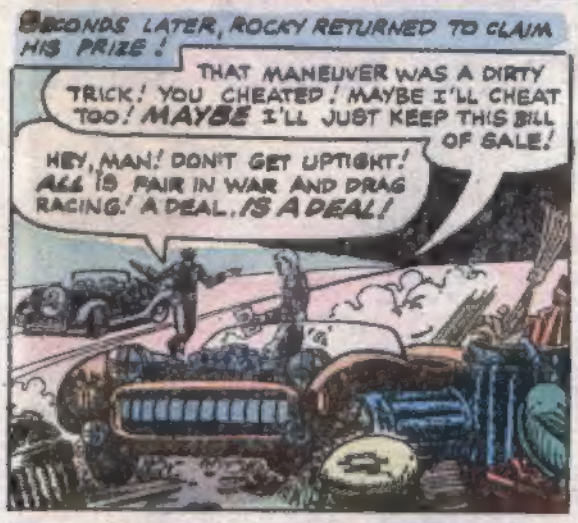




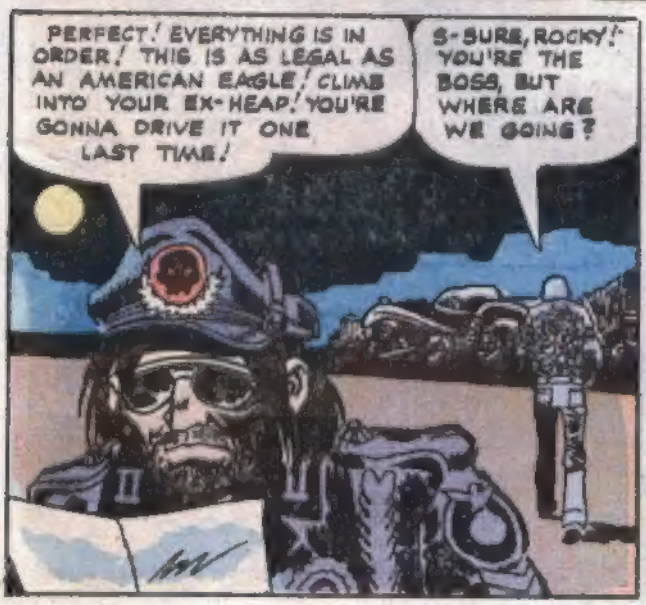
ROCKY **NEVER** TOOK ANY CHANCES! HE DIDN'T LIKE TO LOSE! WINNING WAS **ALL** THAT MATTERED! **HOW** HE PLAYED THE GAME DIDN'T COUNT!

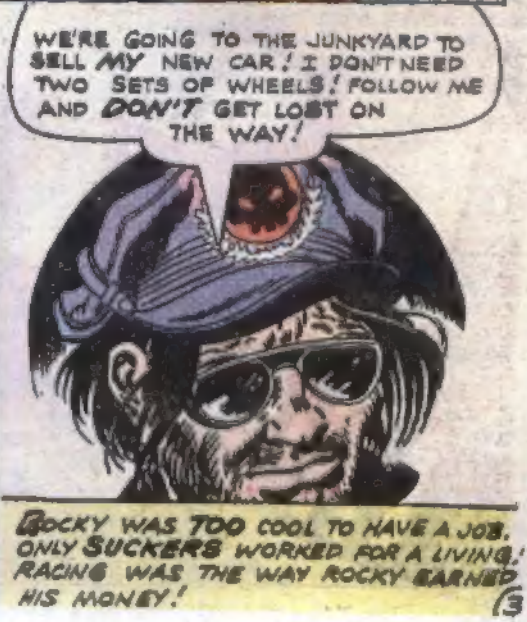



BUCKILY, THE CAR SMASHED INTO A PILE OF TRASH AND STALLED. THE DRIVER WASN'T INJURED!
TOUGH LUCK, KID! YOU SHOULD LEARN HOW TO DRIVE! GET OUT YOUR BILL OF SALE! I'LL BE BACK IN A FLASH TO PICK IT UP!
VROOAR
SCRATCH


SECONDS LATER, ROCKY RETURNED TO CLAIM HIS PRIZE!
THAT MANEUVER WAS A DIRTY TRICK! YOU CHEATED! MAYBE I'LL CHEAT TOO! MAYBE I'LL JUST KEEP THIS BILL OF SALE!
HEY, MAN! DON'T GET UPTIGHT! ALL IS FAIR IN WAR AND DRAG RACING! A DEAL. IS A DEAL!

LISTEN, PUNK! I WON THAT CAR AND I'M TAKING IT! HAND OVER THAT BILL OF SALE OR YOU'LL LOSE YOUR CAR AND YOUR TEETH!
OKAY, OKAY, COOL OFF! T-TAKE THE CAR! IT'S YOURS! HERE'S THE BILL OF SALE!


PERFECT! EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER! THIS IS AS LEGAL AS AN AMERICAN EAGLE! CLIMB INTO YOUR EX-HEAP! YOU'RE GONNA DRIVE IT ONE LAST TIME!
S-SURE, ROCKY! YOU'RE THE BOSS, BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?



ROCKY WAS TOO COOL TO HAVE A JOB. ONLY SUCKERS WORKED FOR A LIVING! RACING WAS THE WAY ROCKY EARNED HIS MONEY!

WEEK AFTER WEEK, DAY AFTER DAY, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, ROCKY WAS ON THE PROWL LOOKING FOR SUCKERS TO HUSTLE.
PICKIN'S HAVE BEEN SLIM LATELY! I'M RUNNING OUT OF CASH! HEY!! THAT'S A SNAZZY HEAP! IF I WON THAT, I'D HAVE IT MADE IN THE SHADE!
DOES YOUR BOYFRIEND NEED MAMA'S PERMISSION TO DRAG RACE, BABY? YOUR FELLOW ISN'T YELLOW, IS HE? WILL HE RACE AGAINST MY JALOPY FOR BILL OF SALE?
BUZZ OFF! WHY SHOULD I RACE? YOUR HEAP ISN'T WORTH A BUFFALO NICKEL!
HANG ON, BRENDA! WE'LL CATCH UP ON THE STRAIGHT AWAY!
WHY DON'T YOU TEACH THAT HOOD A LESSON, GUY? BEAT HIM AND TAKE AWAY HIS LITTLE TOY!
OKAY, HOT SHOT. I'LL RACE! THE FIRST ONE TO REACH THE NEXT CORNER WINS! START WHEN THE LIGHT CHANGES!
I'M GOING TO LOVE OWNING YOUR CAR, CHUMP! HEH! HEH!
ROCKY'S JALOPY WAS FIRST OFF ON THE MARK, BUT THE SPORTS CAR HAD A LOT OF HORSEPOWER UNDER IT'S HOOD!
WONDERFUL LAND
IRIS
THE JALOPY WAS OUTCLASSED, BUT ROCKY WASN'T ABOUT TO BE BEATEN!
HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM APPLES, BIG DADDY?
HEY!! LOOK OUT!
THE SPORTS CAR SPUN OUT OF CONTROL AND SPED TO KEEP A DATE... WITH DOOM AND DEATH!
EEEK!
OH MY GOD! NO!

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ROCKY WON THE RACE, BUT HE WASN'T THE VICTOR! DEATH WAS THE WINNER! HIS PRIZE WAS TWO LIVES!
AHHIEE!
IEEIEEAHH!
OH, MAN! HE TOTALED! THE CAT AND HIS CHICK CASHED IN! NOW THE FUZZ WILL SHOW UP AND ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS! I'D BETTER SPLIT!
QUICKLY, ROCKY ZOOMED AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT!
WHY SHOULD I STICK AROUND AND LET THE COPS PIN A BUM RAP ON ME? IT'S NOT MY FAULT THAT THEY KICKED OFF!
DAYS PASSED. WORD ABOUT THE ACCIDENT GOT AROUND. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE AGAINST ROCKY, BUT STREET PEOPLE DISH OUT THEIR OWN TYPE OF JUSTICE!
HOT DOGS
HEY, HEY, WHAT DO YOU SAY? WHAT'S COOKIN'?
FLAKE OFF, ROCKY! YOU'VE RUN YOUR LAST RACE IN THIS TOWN! DIG?
I DIG! WHO NEEDS YOU CREEPS, ANYWAY? TAKE A LONG WALK DOWN A SHORT PIER!

I HAVEN'T RACED IN WEEKS! I'VE BEEN BLACKLISTED SINCE THAT ACCIDENT! I'M OUT OF MONEY! I'M ALMOST OUT OF GAS! I'M GOING OUT OF MY HEAD!

ROCKY SAID HE DIDN'T NEED PEOPLE, BUT HE DID! NO PEOPLE MEANT NO DRAG RACING! NO DRAG RACING MEANT NO MONEY!

VROOAAR

WHAT'S THAT? IT SOUNDS LIKE A SOUPED-UP RIG. IF IT IS, MAYBE I CAN TALK THE DRIVER INTO DRAGGING AGAINST ME!

THE CAR THAT PULLED UP ALONGSIDE OF ROCKY APPEARED TO BE THE ANSWER TO HIS PRAYERS, BUT WOULD ITS DRIVER AGREE TO RACE?

WOW! NOW, THAT'S A BAD LOOKING PIECE OF MACHINERY! I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT JALOPY BEFORE!

YROOT

YOU'RE NEW AROUND HERE, RIGHT? MY NAME IS ROCKY! I'M KING OF THE ROAD IN THESE PARTS! WANT TO DRAG FOR TITLE, DADDIO?

I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH, BUT I WON'T IGNORE A CHALLENGE!

STOP

LET'S RACE! THIS IS FOR TITLE, RIGHT? WINNER TAKE ALL!

RIGHT!

ROCKY HAD WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS MOMENT! HE PLANNED TO RUN THE RACE OF HIS LIFE!

THE FIRST CAR TO PASS THAT SPEED LIMIT SIGN IS THE WINNER! AGREED?

45

AGREED! WE ROLL AT THE COUNT OF THREE! YOU CALL IT!

HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THIS ONE! ROCKY HAD TOO MUCH AT STAKE!

ONE!

TWO!

COM'ON, BABY, LET'S MOVE!

ROCKY TRIED HIS OLD, DIRTY TRICK, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK! THE MYSTERY DRIVER DROVE LIKE A DEMON AND FORCED ROCKY OFF OF THE ROAD.

WATCH IT, YOU BUM! MOVE OVER! MOVE OVER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

AHH!

ZUNK

HIS ENTIRE FUTURE WAS RIGHT ON THE LINE! HE FLOORED THE GAS PEDAL!

I'M LOSING! THE GUY IS GAINING ON ME! I CAN'T SHAKE HIM! THERE IS ONLY ONE THING LEFT FOR ME TO DO!

I'M GONNA CRASH! I'M GONNA CRASH!

AHHIEEAHH!!

CRASCH!

WHA-WHAT HAPPENED? OOF! MY HEAD IS SPLITTING! PHEW! WHAT A SMACK-UP! I'M LUCKY TO WALK AWAY FROM THIS ONE!
OH, NO! I LOST THE RACE AND MY CAR! ... LISTEN PAL, YOU'RE NOT REALLY GOING TO TAKE THE TITLE TO MY WHEELS, ARE YOU?
FOOL! IT IS NOT THE CAR THAT I WANT! I WASN'T RACING FOR THE CAR! I WAS RACING FOR...
...THE TITLE TO YOUR LIFE! I WON!! YOU'VE LOST YOUR LIFE! YOU'RE DEAD! NOW, I OWN YOU... BODY AND SOUL!
GET THE LEAD OUT, CHUMP! I'VE GOT A LONG HAUL AHEAD AND LOTS OF STOPS TO MAKE! LET'S GET ROLLING!
THERE WOULD BE NO MORE DRAG RACES FOR ROCKY RHODES. HE'D RACED AGAINST DEATH... AND LOST!
END

BEAUTY and the BEAST
I CAN PAY $15 A MONTH, MARIO, AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR OWN QUARTERS ABOVE THE CARRIAGE HOUSE!
THE PAY IS VERY LITTLE, SIGNORA WORTHAM, BUT I THINK I WILL LIKE WORKING AS YOUR GARDENER!
MARIO WAS A VERY HANDSOME MAN... THIS WAS A FACTOR WHEN MRS. WORTHAM HIRED HIM AS THE GARDENER! MARIO ALMOST DIDN'T TAKE THE JOB BECAUSE HIS FIRST IMPRESSION OF MRS. WORTHAM WAS...HE HAD NEVER SEEN AN UGLIER WOMAN! BUT AFTER TEN MINUTES OF CONVERSATION... MARIO SUDDENLY THOUGHT THAT ALICIA WORTHAM WASN'T AS UGLY AS HE'D FIRST BELIEVED!
I WAS SURE YOU'D ACCEPT, MARIO....
A STRANGE THING HAPPENED TO MARIO IN THOSE MOMENTS...AS HE LOOKED AT HER, A TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE...SHE WAS NOT BIBBLE-ARED AND UGLY... SHE WAS GOOD TO LOOK UPON!
...AND I'M SURE YOU'LL BE VERY HAPPY HERE!
D-6143

WHEN I WAS TOLD TO COME HERE, MRS. WORTHAM, THEY TOLD ME YOU WERE MIDDLE-AGED AND UN-PLEASANT! I DO NOT FIND YOU SO!
CALL ME ALICIA, MARIO...AND YOU WILL STAY IN THE CARRIAGE HOUSE!
NO, MY DEAR MAN,..YOU WILL NEVER THINK OF ME AS UGLY AGAIN!
MIRROR, MIRROR, LET ME SEE... THE BEAUTY I'LL HAVE WHEN HE LOOKS AT ME!
AAHH...THAT IS HOW HE SEES ME...HE CANNOT HELP BUT FALL IN LOVE!
INDEED, IT WAS BUT A MATTER OF DAYS BEFORE MARIO WAS HER SLAVE OF LOVE...
I BRING YOU [redacted], SIGNORA...BUT IT CANNOT EQUAL THE DIVINE LOVE-LINESS YOU POSSESS!
CALL ME ALICIA, MARIO... AND PLEASE HAVE TEA WITH ME!
2

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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CUSHION WHOOPEE
TRICK BASEBALL
JOY BUZZER
X-RAY SPECS
MUSCLES OF STEEL
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AND, OF COURSE, FOR MARIO SHE POSSESSED INCREDIBLE BEAUTY...
JUST TO GAZE UPON YOU, FILLS MY HEART WITH JOY, ALICIA!
I AM DELIGHTED TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, MY DEAR!
WORD GOT AROUND TOWN... THE GARDENER, WHEN HE DROVE THE CARRIAGE TO TOWN FOR SUPPLIES, WAS QUERIED...
YOU LIKE WORKING FOR THAT OLD HAG?
HAVE RESPECT FOR MY LADY, SIGNORE!
I RECKON YA FIGURE ANYBODY AS RICH AS THAT HAG IS WORTH SWEET-TALKIN'!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH!
HE HAD TROUBLE IN TOWN... PROBABLY OVER ME!
AS MARIO SAW ALICIA, HE LOOKED VERY CAREFULLY... REMEMBERING HOW MEN IN TOWN CALLED HER A HAG... WHERE HE SAW BEAUTY.. AND STILL DID!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HOME, MARIO!
I MADE HASTE, SIGNORA... SO I COULD SEE YOU MORE QUICKLY!

THERE WERE DINNERS BY CANDLELIGHT....
TO YOU, ALICIA.. THE LOVELIEST WOMAN I HAVE EVER KNOWN!
THEY SAY THAT BEAUTY LIES IN THE EYE OF THE BE-HOLDER, DEAR MARIO...
PERHAPS, SIGNORA... BUT TO ME YOU ARE THE ESSENCE OF BEAUTY!
IF ONLY I WERE A WEALTHY MAN, MY HEART...I WOULD ASK YOU TO BE MY WIFE... I WOULD BRING YOU GIFTS, TELL YOU OF MY LOVE!
YOUR LOVE IS ALL THE TREASURE I DESIRE, DARLING! RICH OR POOR, I WANT YOU TO MARRY ME.
I AM THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD, MY DOVE!
WE WILL BE SO HAPPY TOGETHER!
4

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now you can

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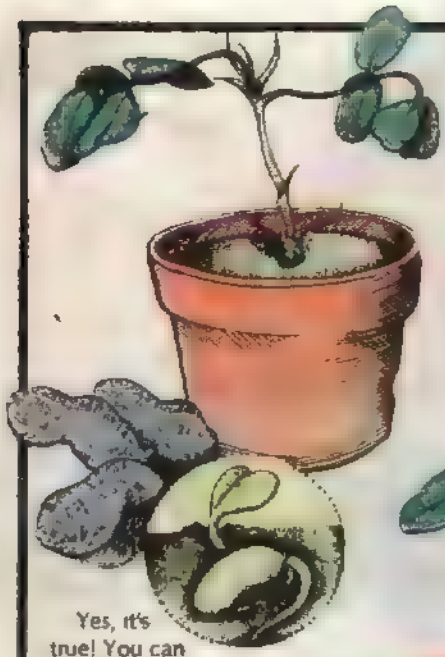

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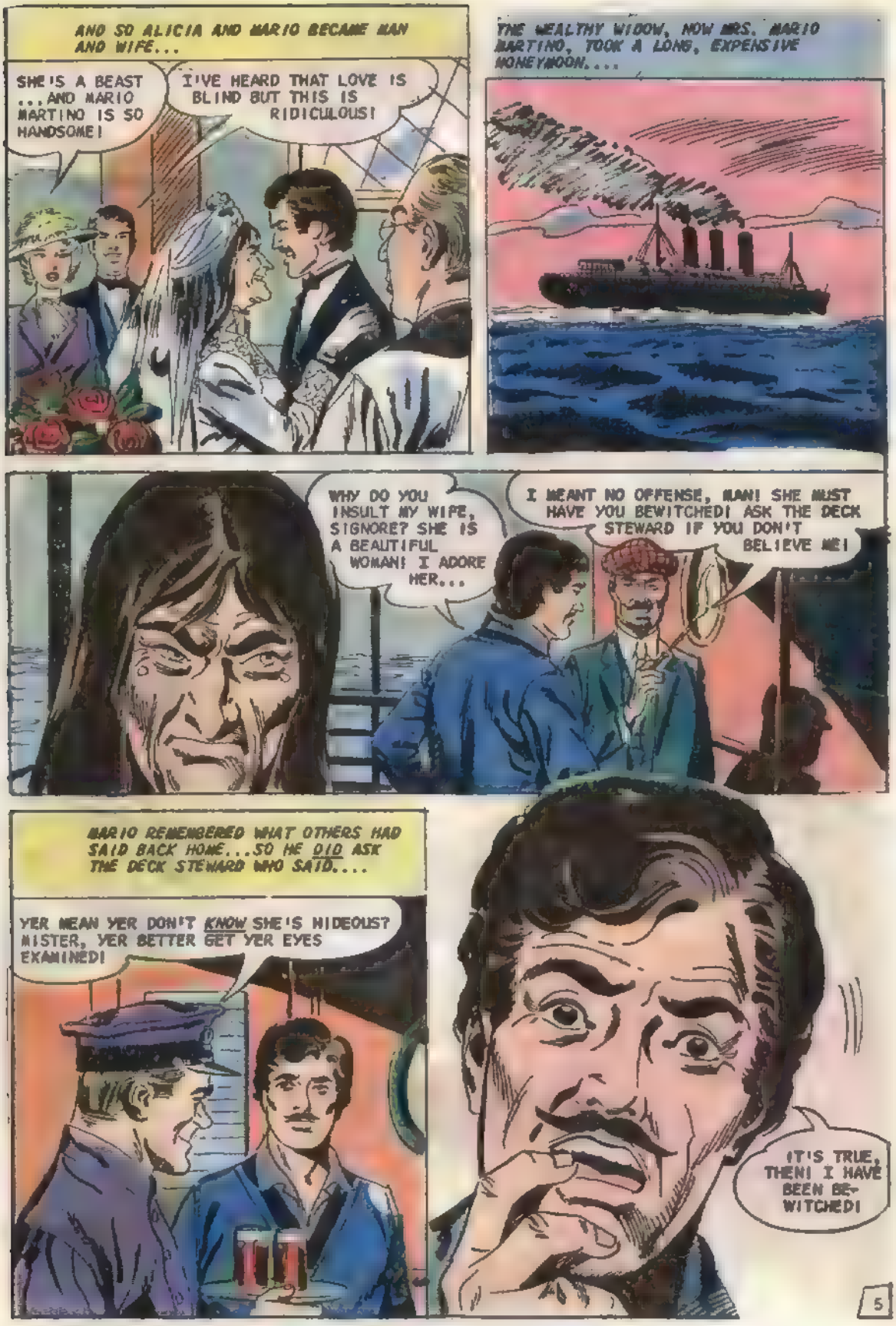
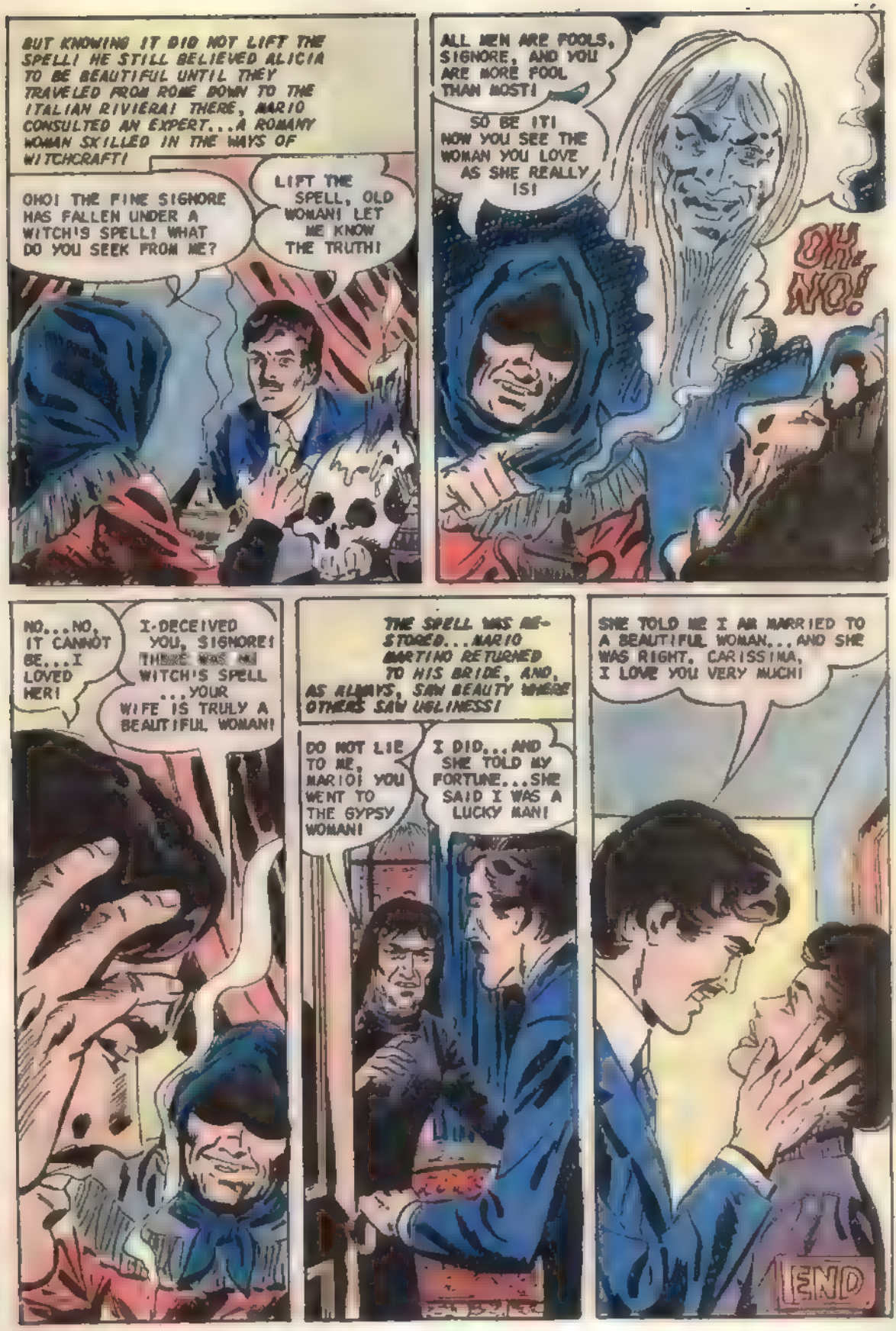

AND SO ALICIA AND MARIO BECAME MAN AND WIFE...
SHE'S A BEAST ...AND MARIO MARTINO IS SO HANDSOME!
I'VE HEARD THAT LOVE IS BLIND BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
THE WEALTHY WIDOW, NOW MRS. MARIO MARTINO, TOOK A LONG, EXPENSIVE HONEYMOON....
WHY DO YOU INSULT MY WIFE, SIGNORE? SHE IS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN! I ADORE HER...
I MEANT NO OFFENSE, MAN! SHE MUST HAVE YOU BEWITCHED! ASK THE DECK STEWARD IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME!
MARIO REMEMBERED WHAT OTHERS HAD SAID BACK HOME...SO HE DID ASK THE DECK STEWARD WHO SAID....
YER MEAN YER DON'T KNOW SHE'S HIDEOUS? MISTER, YER BETTER GET YER EYES EXAMINED!
IT'S TRUE, THEN! I HAVE BEEN BE-WITCHED!


BUT KNOWING IT DID NOT LIFT THE SPELL! HE STILL BELIEVED ALICIA TO BE BEAUTIFUL UNTIL THEY TRAVELED FROM ROME DOWN TO THE ITALIAN RIVIERA! THERE, MARIO CONSULTED AN EXPERT...A ROMANY WOMAN SKILLED IN THE WAYS OF WITCHCRAFT!
OHO! THE FINE SIGNORE HAS FALLEN UNDER A WITCH'S SPELL! WHAT DO YOU SEEK FROM ME?
LIFT THE SPELL, OLD WOMAN! LET ME KNOW THE TRUTH!
ALL MEN ARE FOOLS, SIGNORE, AND YOU ARE MORE FOOL THAN MOST!
SO BE IT! NOW YOU SEE THE WOMAN YOU LOVE AS SHE REALLY IS!
OH, NO!
NO...NO, IT CANNOT BE...I LOVED HER!
I-DECEIVED YOU, SIGNORE! THERE WAS NO WITCH'S SPELL ...YOUR WIFE IS TRULY A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!
THE SPELL WAS RESTORED...MARIO MARTINO RETURNED TO HIS BRIDE, AND, AS ALWAYS, SAW BEAUTY WHERE OTHERS SAW UGLINESS!
DO NOT LIE TO ME, MARIO! YOU WENT TO THE GYPSY WOMAN!
I DID...AND SHE TOLD MY FORTUNE...SHE SAID I WAS A LUCKY MAN!
SHE TOLD ME I AM MARRIED TO A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...AND SHE WAS RIGHT, CARISSIMA, I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH!
THE END

"Look at the size of this footprint," Slade shouted to his hunting partner, Will Darkins. Darkins made his way through the crusty, knee-deep snow to examine the spoor.

"These tracks are gigantic," said Darkins when he saw the huge imprints in the snow. "What kind of animal could have made these? I've never seen anything like that before!" stated the hunter who had stalked big game all over the world.

Slade carefully examined every inch of the monstrous tracks. "It reminds me of a gorilla's spoor, but it's bigger! The creature that left these tracks walked on two feet like a man, but used its upper limbs to support its body — like a gorilla does when it walks!"

Quickly, Slade pointed out the imprints of the creature's hands. The hand marks in the snow seemed to substantiate Slade's theory about the monster being a gorilla-like beast.

"It can't be a primate," argued Darkins. "We're not in Africa or an equatorial country. We're in the Himalayas! Do you realize how cold it gets up here? A gorilla or an ape couldn't survive at this temperature!"

"I didn't say it was a gorilla," Slade corrected. "I simply stated that its means of locomotion is similar to a gorilla's. If you want my honest opinion, I think it's a cross between a gorilla and a man!"

Darkins was stunned by Slade's statement. Could he possibly be correct? How could he? It was too unbelievable to be true. Had they stumbled upon the

tracks of a missing link? Were these footprints made by the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas?

"What do you propose to do?" Darkins asked.

"I suggest that we hunt down this beast and kill it!" announced Slade who felt adrenalin pumping through his body. The thought of bagging the snowman excited, thrilled and fascinated him.

"I'll agree to track it, but I don't think we should kill it if we find it," argued Darkins. "We've both done our share of hunting and killing in our day, but this is different. This animal could be related to man. It would be wrong to shoot it down like a wild bear or a fierce lion. It would be murder!"

"A trophy is a trophy," answered Slade as he began to follow the trail that led higher up into the mountains. Reluctantly, sadly, slowly, Darkins pursued his cronie.

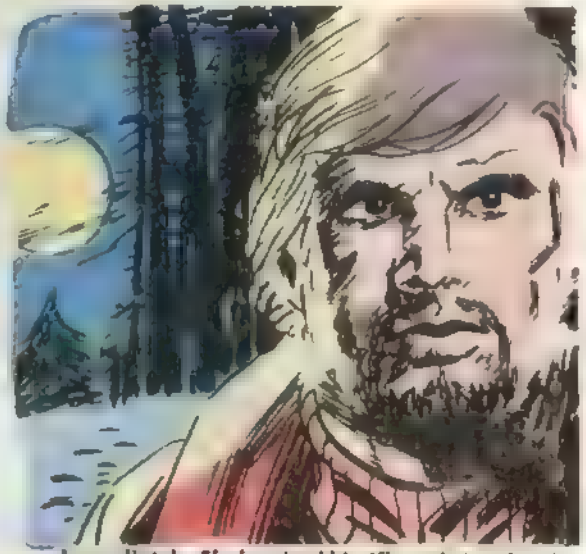
The two friends were similar in many ways, but when it came right down to the core of their personalities, they were vastly different.

Slade had money to burn. A large inheritance had made him an instant millionaire. He could afford to buy whatever he wanted, but he preferred to take things! Slade especially enjoyed taking the lives of large, game animals. The man was a fanatical hunter. He enjoyed killing! He liked playing God! A high powered rifle in his hands made him feel like a big [illegible]!

The friendship between Darkins and Slade was an odd thing. It was money and the lack of other close friends that had brought them together. Both men were loners in their own ways. Darkins had made his million the hard way. He was a prospector who struck it rich in the late 1930's. Hunting was a sport and a pleasurable pastime to Darkins. He liked to track game. He liked to stalk game, but he didn't like to kill! Life was sacred to Darkins. He believed that every creature deserved the chance to live out its life in peace and contentment.

Endless hours later, after covering many, barren, desolate miles of frozen wasteland, they came upon the beast they were tracking.

Indeed, it was a monster! It was a missing link! It was the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas! The creature was man-like in form, but hairy like a gorilla. The fur that covered its massive hide was as white as the snow. The beast was hideous, horrible and terrible to behold.



Immediately, Slade raised his rifle and aimed at the center of the beast's hairy breast. His eyes scanned the sites until the gun was trained on the monster's heart. His finger curled around the trigger and slowly it began to squeeze and squeeze and squeeze!

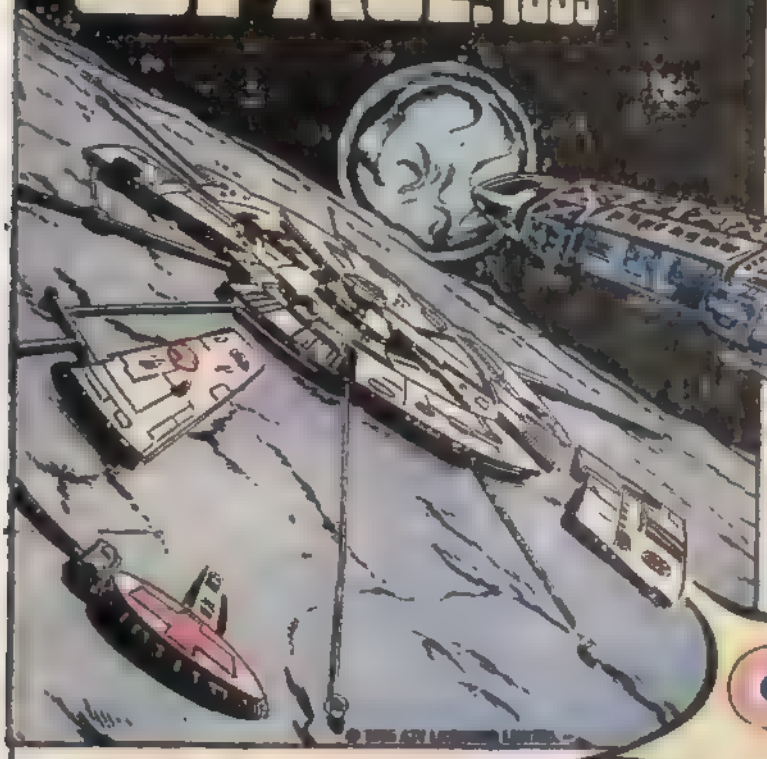
"Wait! The thing is friendly! It's not making any threatening gestures! Don't do it!" pleaded Darkins. Pleading was futile. Slade was determined to slay the monster no matter how peaceful it appeared to be.

A single shot was fired and the ominous sound caromed from slope to slope and echoed throughout [illegible].

The deafening noise scared the snow beast. Quickly, it lumbered away to seek the safety of the upper regions of the mountains.

Darkins dropped his smoking rifle. It landed near the body of Slade which was sprawled on the blanket of ivory white snow. A monster was dead. Darkins had killed it.

WATCH FOR SPACE: 1999



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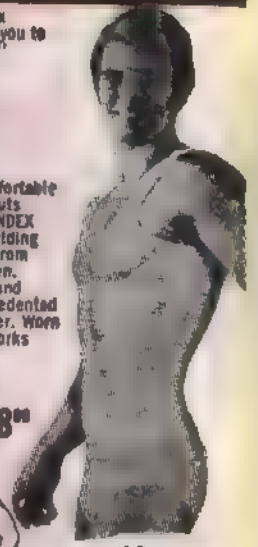

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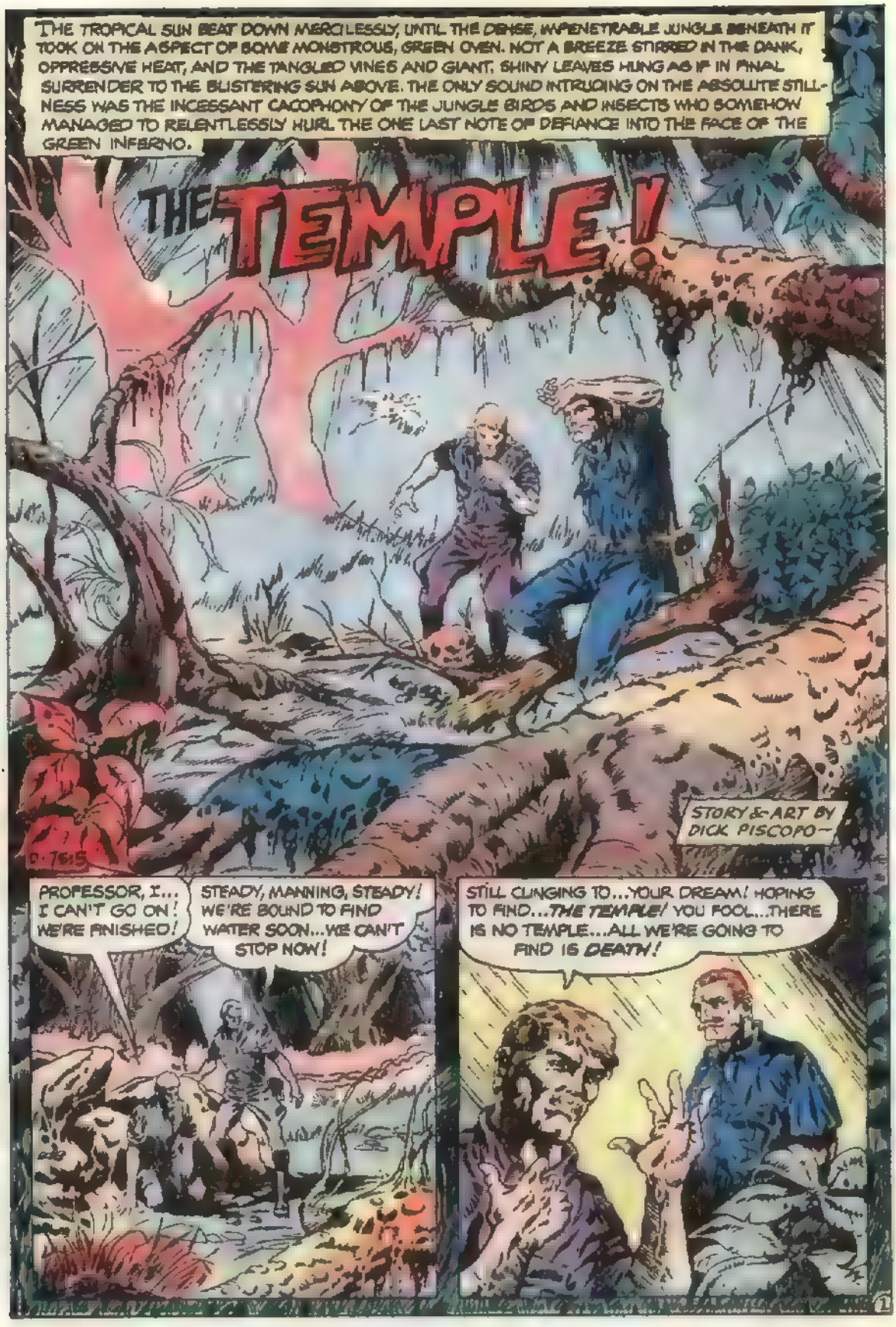
THE TROPICAL SUN BEAT DOWN MERCILESSLY, UNTIL THE DENSE, IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE BENEATH IT TOOK ON THE ASPECT OF SOME MONSTROUS, GREEN OVEN. NOT A BREEZE STIRRED IN THE DANK, OPPRESSIVE HEAT, AND THE TANGLED VINES AND GIANT, SHINY LEAVES HUNG AS IF IN FINAL SURRENDER TO THE BLISTERING SUN ABOVE. THE ONLY SOUND INTRUDING ON THE ABSOLUTE STILLNESS WAS THE INCESSANT CACOPHONY OF THE JUNGLE BIRDS AND INSECTS WHO SOMEHOW MANAGED TO RELENTLESSLY HURL THE ONE LAST NOTE OF DEFIANCE INTO THE FACE OF THE GREEN INFERNO.
THE TEMPLE!
STORY & ART BY DICK PISCOPO
PROFESSOR, I... I CAN'T GO ON! WE'RE FINISHED!
STEADY, MANNING, STEADY! WE'RE BOUND TO FIND WATER SOON...WE CAN'T STOP NOW!
STILL CLINGING TO...YOUR DREAM! HOPING TO FIND...THE TEMPLE! YOU FOOL...THERE IS NO TEMPLE...ALL WE'RE GOING TO FIND IS DEATH!

SUDDENLY, A SOUND...THE MOURNFUL, TOLLING SOUND OF A HUGE GONG...
MANNING...DID YOU HEAR THAT?
I...I HEARD SOMETHING!
AGAIN, THE JUNGLE STILLNESS IS BROKEN BY THE SOUND...
A GONG! YES, FROM THE SOUND OF IT...HUGE, GIGANTIC!
BUT HERE...IN THIS JUNGLE...WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
DON'T YOU SEE? WE'VE FOUND IT...WE'VE FOUND THE TEMPLE! THE TEMPLE OF GWARUNGA!
THE INCREDIBLE SOUND OF THAT TOLLING GONG LENT AN AURA OF UTTER FANTASY TO THAT DANK, STEAMING JUNGLE. BUT TO PROFESSOR EDWARD CARRUTHERS, AND HIS YOUNG ASSISTANT, DR. JEFFREY MANNING, THAT SOUND WAS LIFE...FOR SUDDENLY THE HEAT FADED, THE EXHAUSTION DISAPPEARED, AND A SUDDEN EUPHORIA SENT THEM CRASHING THROUGH THE DRIPPING UNDERBRUSH TOWARD THE SOUND OF THAT MYSTERIOUS, DISTANT PEELING...
THERE, IT STOOD, RISING OUT OF THE GREEN JUNGLE... SHIMMERING AND GLEAMING IN THE BRILLIANT HAZE... ...A SIGHT NEVER BEHELD BY CIVILIZED MAN...THE LEGENDARY TEMPLE OF GWARUNGA!

SLOWLY, THE AWESTRICKEN EXPLORERS APPROACHED THE TEMPLE... UP THE LONG FLIGHT OF POLISHED STONE STEPS TO A HUGE, ORNATELY DESIGNED DOOR.
INCREDIBLE... THESE STEPS...THIS DOOR...THE WORKMANSHIP IS MARVELOUS!
IF THAT'S GOLD AROUND THE DOOR...
DAMMIT, MANNING! FORGET THE GOLD! THIS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST...MAYBE THE GREATEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND EVER!
LISTEN...THE GONG!
GOOD LORD! I COMPLETELY FORGOT! THERE MUST BE SOMEONE HERE! BUT WHO?
LET'S FIND OUT!
CARRUTHERS AND MANNING RACED DOWN THE STRANGE, LABYRINTHINE CORRIDORS OF THE TEMPLE...RACED TOWARD THAT FATEFUL TOLLING THAT SEEMED TO DRAW THEM TOWARD IT...
MANNING, THERE IT IS! THE GONG! BUT...
NO ONE'S THERE...NOT A SIGN OF ANYONE!
MANNING, LOOK AT THE WALLS! THOSE PAINTINGS...
ARE THOSE HUMANS DEPICTED THERE?
YES, I THINK SO...BUT WITH CERTAIN SUBTLE DIFFERENCES FROM HUMANS AS WE KNOW THEM!
PROFESSOR, THIS ONE SHOWS HUMANS BATTLING DINOSAURS! BUT WE KNOW THAT THE DINOSAUR VANISHED BEFORE MAN EVER EXISTED!
DO WE, MANNING? I WONDER...I WONDER.

YES...YES, CARRUTHERS, BUT LOOK AROUND US! THERE'S ENOUGH WEALTH HERE TO MAKE US RICH BEYOND OUR WILDEST DREAMS!
THE TRUE WEALTH HERE, MANNING, IS THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION THIS TEMPLE HAS TO OFFER SCIENCE!
WHY, YOU OLD FOOL! YOU'D MAKE THE EXISTENCE OF THIS TEMPLE KNOWN? WE'D LOSE EVERYTHING... WOULDN'T GET A DIME!
I SEE! YES, YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT...I AM A FOOL... I NEVER DID REALIZE YOUR MOTIVATION.
ALL THE MOTIVATION I EVER NEEDED WAS THOSE STORIES THE NATIVES TOLD US... OF THE INCREDIBLE TREASURES OF GWARUNGA...WHAT WE SEE HERE IS ONLY A TASTE! THE TREASURE ITSELF MUST DEFY THE IMAGINATION!
MANNING STRUCK OUT ON HIS OWN. HE MADE HIS WAY THRU THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MAZE OF CORRIDORS THAT HONEYCOMBED THE TEMPLE. FINALLY, HE CAME UPON A ROOM THAT STOOD OFF THE LAST CORRIDOR HE HAD TRAVERSED...
THAT DOOR! SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT ABOUT IT... WHY, IT'S... IT'S OPEN!
A LAMP...STILL BURNING. BUT THE DOOR HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS STRANGE...
PICKING UP THE STRANGE LAMP, MANNING CIRCLED THE ROOM. SUDDENLY...
GOOD GOD!

AT FIRST, MANNING FROZE AT THE SIGHT OF THE HOODED FIGURE. THEN, OVERCOMING HIS INITIAL SHOCK, HE APPROACHED THE SEATED ONE.
LORD...THE SAME FACE AS THOSE IN THE PAINTINGS...MUST BE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD! A MUMMY! YET, NO WRAPPINGS OF ANY KIND...
TURNING FROM THE FIGURE, MANNING NOTICED THE ALTAR IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM.
THOSE COLORATIONS COVERING THE TOP AND RUNNING OFF THE SIDES...UNMISTAKABLE! A SACRIFICIAL ALTAR.
AS MANNING'S HAND CAUTIOUSLY RAN OVER THE SIDE OF THE BLOOD SMEARED ALTAR, THERE WAS A SUDDEN SOUND...AND MOVEMENT, AS THE ALTAR PONDEROUSLY BEGAN TO ROLL ASIDE. AND THEN...
THE TREASURE...GOOD GOD, IT'S THE TREASURE!
SUDDENLY, PROFESSOR CARRUTHERS BURST INTO THE CHAMBER...
MANNING...YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE WHAT I'VE FOUND!
CARRUTHERS...LOOK! THE TREASURE OF GWARUNGA!
NEVER MIND THAT! LISTEN, I'VE DECIPHERED SOME HIEROGLYPHICS ON THE PAINTINGS. THOUGH DEFINITELY ALIEN, THEY CONTAIN A STRAIN OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN!
WELL....GO ON, GO ON...
THOSE PEOPLE IN THE PAINTINGS ARE ALIEN...EXTRATERRESTRIAL ...FROM OUTER SPACE!
WHAT?
THEY ARRIVED HERE, MAYBE CRASHED, BEFORE MAN EVER WALKED THE EARTH! IN FACT, THEY MAY BE OUR ANCESTORS!

INTERESTING.
INTERESTING! IT'S ASTOUNDING! THESE PEOPLE WERE MARVELS... EXTREMELY ADVANCED! AND THE ESSENCE OF THEIR SOCIETY WAS A RELIGION...A FORM OF ANCESTOR WORSHIP! PROBING FURTHER, I DISCOVERED A CONTINUOUSLY RECURRING FIGURE... A MUMMY!
WHY...MY LORD, THERE IT IS! THE MUMMY! AND THE ALTAR...YES, IT ALL FITS!
THIS DAGGER... BEAUTIFUL! LOOK AT IT!
THE DAGGER...THE SACRIFICIAL DAGGER IN THE PAINTING...MANNING, THE PICTURE IS COMPLETE NOW! BUT YOU MUSTN'T TOUCH IT UNTIL IT'S CATALOGUED AND NUMBERED.
GUESS AGAIN, CARRUTHERS.
THE PROFESSOR, STUNNED BY THE LOOK OF TOTAL MENACE IN MANNING'S EYES, INADVERTANTLY BEGAN TO MOVE BACKWARD TOWARD THE ALTAR...
NO...NO, MANNING...YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
IN A GREAT GOLDEN ARC, THE JEWELED DAGGER DESCENDED, CUTTING OFF THE STRUGGLING PROFESSOR'S PLEAS. AGAIN AND AGAIN THE BEAUTIFUL INSTRUMENT OF DEATH CURVED DOWNWARD...
THE TREASURE IS MINE...MINE...
MANNING DREW AWAY FROM THE INERT FORM, AND DIRECTED HIS ATTENTION TO THE TREASURE...
MINE...ALL MINE...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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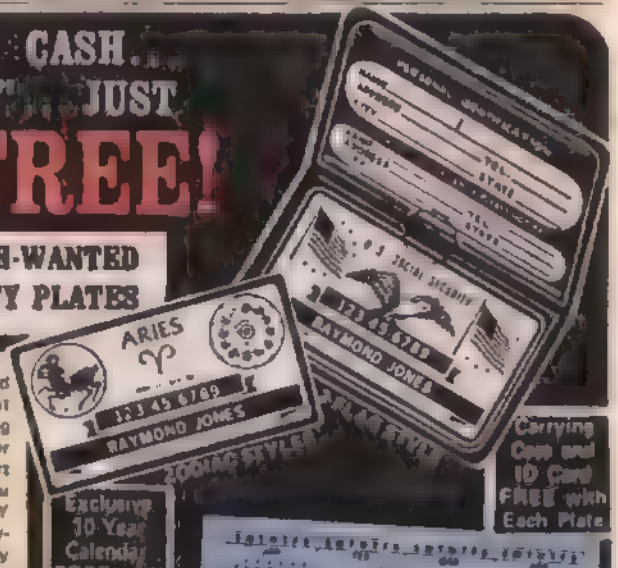
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MANNING DID NOT NOTICE THE BLOOD FLOWING FROM THE PROFESSOR'S TWISTED BODY ONTO THE SMOOTH SURFACE OF THE ALTAR...
NOR WAS HE AWARE OF THE PRE-CUT CHANNELS IN THE FLOOR, THAT DIRECTED THE FLOWING, RED FLUID IN AN INEXORABLE PATH TOWARD THE SILENT FIGURE IN THE CORNER...
MANNING FEVERISHLY CLAWED AT THE FANTASTIC TREASURE BEFORE HIM. HE WASN'T IMMEDIATELY AWARE OF THE GRATING SOUND ABOVE HIM. BUT THEN, LOOKING UP, HE SUDDENLY REALIZED THE ALTAR WAS SLIDING CLOSED...
DROPPING THE GOLD AND JEWELS, HE REACHED UPWARD TO STOP THAT FATEFUL MOVEMENT, BUT HIS GRASPING FINGERS ENCOUNTERED THE INCREDIBLY SMOOTH UNDERSIDE OF THE ALTAR...
...AND HIS LAST REALIZATION, BEFORE THE FINAL SLIVER OF LIGHT WAS EXTINGUISHED, WAS AN ANCIENT, WRINKLED FACE, STARING DOWN, WITH THE FAINTEST HINT OF A SINISTER SMILE...
The End

DEEP IN THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS, THERE WAS A PEAK HIGHER THAN THE REST.. AND A CASTLE BROODED OVER THE SHADOWED VALLEYS. HERE THEY CAME..THE WITCHES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD... TO CELEBRATE THEIR SABBAT OR DAY ON WHICH THEY RENEWED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE DEVIL!
WITCHES' SABBAT
PRATHER
THEIR LEADER IN A CEREMONY DEDICATED TO SATAN PROCLAIMED THEIR POWER...
D-7974
AS SHE SPOKE, FROM THE DARK AND LOWERING CLOUDS A BRIGHT STROKE OF LIGHTNING FLASHED...
AWED INHABITANTS OF NEARBY TOWNS SAW THE STORM.. IT HUNG OVER THE CASTLE WHILE BOLT AFTER BOLT OF LIGHTNING SHATTERED AND BURNED THE WITCHE'S CASTLE AND ALL WITHIN!
END

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